



TalkN Walk

Toolkit for Schools



A physical activity and mental wellbeing in nature program developed by Nature Play WA and Western Australian girls.

Proudly supported by:





How to Implement Talk N Walk

Talk N Walk is a simple, flexible program with everything you need to get started provided in this toolkit.

Take students out for Talk N Walk sessions at anytime, anywhere - the more natural the location the better.

When planning sessions, ensure they are inclusive and accessible giving consideration to any mobility or sensory needs. The activities can be adapted for K-12 and can be run in pairs, with small groups, as a classroom activity or as a whole of school event.

We recommended student's Talk N Walk for at least 10 minutes to see the positive impacts.

Students can use either the Talk N Walk app, loaded on a school iPad, or the hardcopy activity and conversation cards provided in this toolkit.



Spaces with plants, grass, water, shade and wildlife are ideal.



Adapt how you implement Talk N Walk, considering mobility and sensory needs.



Talk N Walk for >10minutes to see the benefits.

About the Program

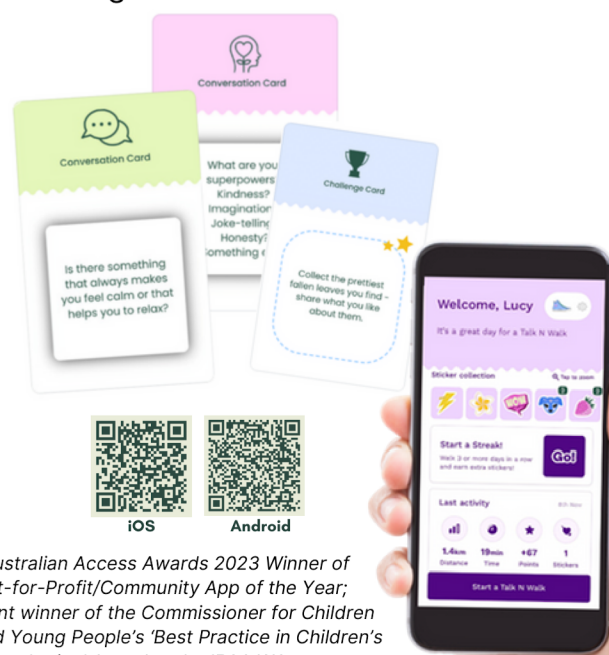
Talk N Walk is a highly adaptable award-winning physical and mental wellbeing in nature program facilitated through the Talk N Walk app or tech-free downloadable resources provided in this toolkit.

The program has been co-designed with more than 100 ten-to fifteen-year-old girls, including those who identify as girls and non-gender conforming individuals, from around WA.

What is a Talk N Walk?

A Talk N Walk is a social walk in nature where students complete a nature activity challenge while walking and talking with the support of conversation starter prompts. Students can use the app or hand held cards to guide the nature activities and conversations during their walk.

Students are asked to consider their mood before and after their walks to facilitate an understanding of how physical activity paired with social interaction in nature can improve mental wellbeing.



**Australian Access Awards 2023 Winner of Not-for-Profit/Community App of the Year;
Joint winner of the Commissioner for Children and Young People's 'Best Practice in Children's Consultation' Award at the IPAA WA Achievement Awards 2022*



Use Talk N Walk as an activity to start the school day and focus students.

Positive start to the day: Starting the day with a nature-based walk sets a positive tone for the rest of the day. Exposure to natural light, fresh air and physical activity are known to enhance cognitive function and improve concentration, and can be particularly beneficial for students who feel lethargic in the morning.

Collaborative and supporting learning environment: The collaborative nature-based activity challenges and conversation prompts can help facilitate social interactions and create a sense of excitement and curiosity that makes students more receptive to learning.

Routine and consistency: Consistency is key in establishing positive habits and, ideally, students will come to associate the morning Talk N Walk with the beginning of their learning day.

"I like being out in nature and starting my day like this." Year 7 student - Mt Lawley SHS



"Walking around the entire town to collect our students is such a positive start to the day. Best thing as a teacher, is the chance to find out my student's mind set and debrief them or make considerations for them to get through their day." Principal - Cue PS

Use Talk N Walk as a tool to build class relationships and facilitate the resolution of disputes.

Talk N Walk sessions can be used effectively by teachers to strengthen class relationships and resolve disputes.

Informal Communication: The relaxed setting of a nature walk creates a conducive environment for informal communication. Teachers can use this time to engage in casual conversations with students, getting to know them on a personal level.

"From personal experience, I find I get a lot more out of students and finding where they're at (mentally), and they're way more comfortable chatting to me if they head outside for a walk."

Jade Browning, Healthy Active Coordinator - Mt Lawley SHS



Shared Experience: Educators can pair or group students for their Talk N Walk with classmates they might not usually spend time with. The conversation prompts and nature-based activity challenges promote teamwork and shared experiences, helping to create common ground

"My favourite thing was the sandcastle because we got to work together." Jack, 6 years - South Coast Baptist College

CEO

Problem-Solving Discussions: During a Talk N Walk, educators can raise topics related to problem solving or decision making. This can be done through hypothetical scenarios or real-life situations, with students encouraged to discuss potential solutions, fostering critical thinking and communication skills.



There are blank Talk N Walk cards that teachers can use to create their own classroom specific discussion points.



Teaching Social Skills: Talk N Walk can be used as an opportunity to explicitly teach and reinforce social skills, such as active listening, effective communication, and teamwork.

Educators can incorporate reflective exercises into the Talk N Walk sessions, allowing students to share thoughts or experiences related to class dynamics or conflicts. An emphasis can be placed on the importance of active listening and students can be encouraged to listen attentively to their peers' perspectives and share their own thoughts.

Follow-up discussions or activities in the classroom can be used to reinforce the positive aspects of the outdoor experience. Insights gained during the walk can be discussed, including how they can be applied to classroom relationships.

*"I learned how to make a sandcastle tunnel and we sorted out our differences."
Elijah, 6 years - South Coast Baptist College*



Appreciation and Recognition: Educators can use the Talk N Walk program as an opportunity to appreciate and recognise positive behaviour. Instances of collaboration, leadership, kindness, or effective communication observed during the walks can be acknowledged and recognised.

Peer Mentorship: Educators can pair older students with younger ones during Talk N Walk sessions, fostering positive peer relationships and mentorship. Older students can provide support to younger peers, contributing to a positive and inclusive school culture.

Family Involvement: Educators can extend the Talk N Walk program to involve families by encouraging them to use the Talk N Walk app together at home. Family involvement strengthens the connection between home and school and reinforces the value of talking and walking for health and mental wellbeing.



"Feeling connected to nature was important for her well-being...[our] daughter asked for "bush" like places to walk even when you are in the city. Together we have investigated local bush land, nature reserves, coastline to plan for future walks." Quote from parent involved in Talk N Walk Pilot Program



Making the Talk N Walk program a regular part of the school routine will help build trust and familiarity among students, creating a comfortable space for addressing and resolving conflicts.



Send students out to Talk N Walk for a brain break.

Incorporating the Talk N Walk program as a student brain break provides an opportunity for physical activity, stress reduction, social interaction, and a cognitive reset.

Here are some ideas for how to Use Talk N Walk for student brain breaks:

- **Scheduled Breaks:** Incorporate Talk N Walk as a scheduled brain break during longer class periods or after particularly demanding activities.
- **Transition Periods:** Use the Talk N Walk program as a transitional activity between subjects or class periods. This helps students shift their focus and reset for the next task.
- **Spontaneous Breaks:** Allow for spontaneous Talk N Walk breaks when you observe signs of restlessness, lack of focus, or decreased engagement in the classroom.
- **Flexible Duration:** Adjust the duration of the Talk N Walk based on the needs of the students and the available time. It can be a short, brisk walk or a more leisurely stroll, depending on the desired level of physical activity.
- **Incorporate Mindfulness:** Integrate mindfulness elements into the walk, such as guided breathing exercises or observations of nature, to enhance the calming and centring effects.
- **Student-Led Walks:** Occasionally, allow students to take the lead in organising Talk N Walk sessions to promote leadership skills and a sense of ownership among students.

CEO



*"It refreshes my mind before class."
Year 7 student - Mt Lawley SHS*

"I like that it [the Talk N Walk program] helps us to socialise and go outside for some fresh air and exercise." Year 8 student - Central Midlands SHS



Talk N Walk can be used to teach life skill techniques when discussing how to manage health and wellbeing

UNICEF, UNESCO and the WHO list the ten core life skill strategies and techniques as: problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication skills, decision making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness building skills, empathy and coping with stress and emotions.

The Talk N Walk program provides a fun and practical way to teach a number of these skills. By framing talking and walking in nature as a life skill technique, educators can empower students to take an active role in managing their health and wellbeing.

Using the Talk N Walk app or downloadable charts provided (see Appendix), ask students to label how they are feeling before and after each Talk N Walk to help reinforce how the combination of getting outdoors, being physically active and connecting with one another positively affects mental wellbeing.

Physical Activity for Health: Walking is a form of physical exercise that contributes to overall health and wellbeing. It improves cardiovascular health, helps maintain a healthy weight, and supports muscular and joint health.

- **Teaching Point:** Emphasise the importance of incorporating regular physical activity into one's routine for lifelong health. Walking in nature provides a low-impact, accessible way to achieve this.



"Feeling socially connected plays an important role in promoting happiness, self-esteem and confidence. Proven links include lower rates of anxiety and depression, higher self-esteem, greater empathy, and more trusting and co-operative relationships. It is why this project [Talk N Walk] is so important." Dr Jacqueline Reid M Ed; B Psych; Bed; BSc; PGC Leadership

Stress Management: Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress levels and promote mental well-being. Combining walking with conversation adds a social and communicative aspect, further enhancing the stress-relieving benefits.

- **Teaching Point:** Teach students that nature walks can be a powerful tool for managing stress. Encourage them to engage in open conversations during walks, fostering a supportive environment.

"...having a motive to do physical activity is very important, and not just to get physically active....being with friends gives a motive...don't make it towards the body shape or those kinds of goals..." Year 8 student - Mt Lawley SHS

Mindfulness and Presence: Walking in nature allows individuals to be present in the moment, observing the surroundings, and experiencing a sense of mindfulness. The combination of movement and natural stimuli contributes to mental clarity.

- **Teaching Point:** Introduce the concept of mindfulness and being present. Discuss how the practice of talking and walking in nature can be a mindfulness technique, promoting focus and awareness.

Problem-Solving in a Relaxed Setting: The outdoor setting provides a conducive environment for problem-solving discussions. Walking side by side can make conversations feel less confrontational and more collaborative.

- **Teaching Point:** Demonstrate how the combination of movement, fresh air, and a non-threatening environment can facilitate constructive problem-solving. Encourage students to apply this technique in various aspects of their lives.

Emotional Wellbeing: Physical activity, particularly in nature, has positive effects on mood. The act of talking while walking can provide an outlet for expressing emotions and seeking support.

- **Teaching Point:** Discuss the link between physical activity, emotional wellbeing, and the importance of having healthy emotional outlets. Encourage students to use nature walks as a tool for emotional expression.





"The idea for Talk N Walk is great because most teenage girls stay inside, are on their phones in their bedrooms, and are not spending the day going out and socialising and seeing people...they're staying inside and comparing themselves to people on social media. So it's a great way to get girls outside, and it releases endorphins, which makes you a happier person, so this app can actually really help a lot of girls' wellbeing". Year 6 student - St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls

Communication and Relationship Building: Walking and talking create a relaxed setting for communication. It fosters open dialogue, active listening, and strengthens interpersonal relationships.

- **Teaching Point:** Emphasise the importance of effective communication for maintaining healthy relationships. Teach active listening skills and the value of shared experiences in building connections.

Creating Healthy Habits: Integrating nature walks into a routine establishes a healthy habit. This technique emphasises the importance of consistent self-care for long-term health and wellbeing.

- **Teaching Point:** Discuss the formation of habits and the role they play in overall health. Encourage students to incorporate nature walks as a regular part of their lives for sustained benefits.



"Apart from physical health benefits, research has demonstrated that contact with nature has restorative properties, fostering an individual's feelings of vitality, alertness, focus, and resurgence in energy." There is also a growing body of evidence that shows that "nature's green gym" provides benefits that outweigh those provided by exercising indoors." More People More Active Outdoors Framework - Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries

Integrate Talk N Walk sessions into your school buddy/peer mentor program

By incorporating the Talk N Walk program into a school buddy and/or peer mentor initiative, educators can create a unique and positive experience that goes beyond traditional classroom interactions.

*"The students are loving it by the way. They keep asking when their next session is on."
Jon Lituri, College Director Health/Wellbeing Institute - South Coast Baptist College*

Pair up buddies and schedule Talk N Walk sessions where they can engage in conversation and active listening while walking together. The outdoor, non-classroom setting promotes a more casual environment and walking side by side minimises face-to-face confrontation, making it easier for buddies to open up and share.

- **Nearly 50% of Talk N Walk pilot program participants reported being able to talk more about things they wouldn't normally talk about.**

Use the Talk N Walk nature-based activity challenges to encourage collaboration, shared experiences, and a sense of camaraderie.

Making Talk N Walk a regular part of the school buddy/peer mentor program can create a positive routine and sense of familiarity for participants, contributing to the success of the program over time.



The purple Talk N Walk cards are intended to spark creativity and imagination.



Conversation Card

What are some of the things you are curious, or want to learn, about?



Talk N Walk can be identified as a strategy within student's Individualised Education Plan (IEP)

Incorporating the Talk N Walk program into a student's Individualised Education Plan (IEP) involves recognising the unique needs and goals outlined in the plan and tailoring the outdoor walking and talking sessions to support those objectives. Here are some specific examples of how Talk N Walk could be incorporated into an IEP:

- **Communication and Social Skills:** If the student has communication or social skills goals, use Talk N Walk as an opportunity to work on these objectives. Encourage the student to engage in conversation during the walk, focusing on the development of effective communication and social interaction skills.

"the [Talk N Walk] activity was great in getting participants who usually would not interact into a conversation where they were able to find out common interests and hobbies. Many of the topics were also fun to discuss and there was lots of laughter and banter in the group." Spectrum Space facilitator on trialling Talk N Walk as part of the 2023 'autism friendliness' program review.

- **Sensory Integration:** For students with sensory processing goals, incorporate sensory-rich elements during the outdoor walk. Plan nature-based sensory activities, such as observing different textures, smelling flowers, or feeling different surfaces, to support sensory integration.
- **Behavioral Self-Regulation:** If the IEP includes goals related to behavioral self-regulation, utilise Talk N Walk as a tool for promoting emotional regulation. Teach the student self-regulation techniques during the walk, such as deep breathing or mindful walking, to help manage emotions.

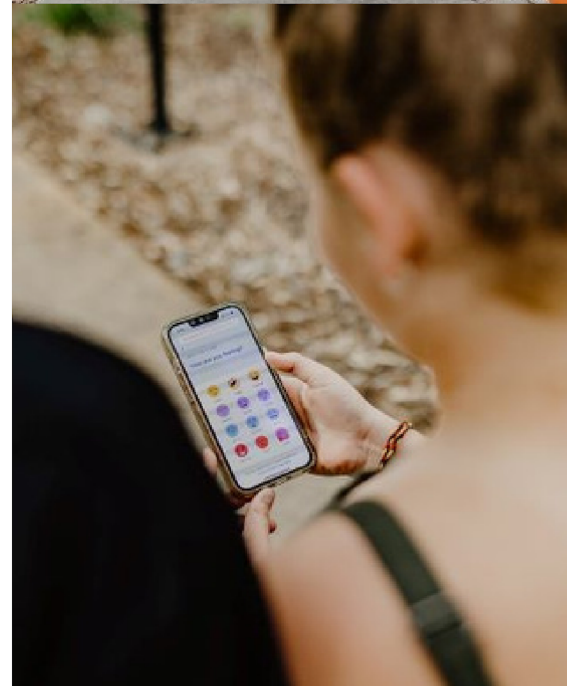


The pink Talk N Walk cards foster growth mindset and mindfulness.





- **Physical Activity and Health Goals:** If the student has physical activity or health-related goals, use Talk N Walk as a means of incorporating exercise into their routine. Plan walks of varying intensities based on the student's physical abilities, promoting overall health and wellbeing.
- **Academic Support:** Integrate academic support into the Talk N Walk sessions for students with academic goals. Discuss academic topics related to the student's curriculum during the walk, reinforcing learning in a different context.
- **Transition Support:** If the IEP includes transition goals, use Talk N Walk as a supportive activity during transition periods. Schedule Talk N Walk sessions strategically to assist with transitions between activities or classes, promoting a smooth and positive transition.
- **Collaboration with Support Staff:** Collaborate with special education teachers, therapists, or support staff involved in the student's IEP. Work together to align Talk N Walk with the broader goals outlined in the student's IEP, ensuring a cohesive and coordinated approach.
- **Parent and Guardian Involvement:** Communicate the incorporation of Talk N Walk into the IEP to parents or guardians. Encourage families to support the outdoor program at home, using the Talk N Walk app or downloadable resources, and share insights into the student's experiences during the walks.



Organise a Talk N Walk whole-of-school event to build community and create awareness around mental wellbeing.

Arrange a 'Talk N Walk to School Day' where families are encouraged to give the app a go and have some fun completing the walking challenges as they make their way to or from school.

- Invite student leaders to plan the event and create the promotional material.
- Draw promotional messages, conversation starters or walking challenges in chalk on footpaths leading to school.
- Organise some wellbeing activities that families can participate in when they get to school (e.g. rock decorating, yoga, nature bingo, dance party etc.)
- Set up a 'Wellbeing Wall' for students, staff and parents stick up pictures and/or write about activities they do or strategies that they use to support their wellbeing.
- Ask students to create their own walking challenges and conversation starters and arrange a 'Talk N Walk' during recess and/or with buddy classes.



Coolbinia Primary School

Our Year 4 Your Move team organised a Talk N Walk event. They prepared various forms of promotion – feet posters, feet stencils, PA announcements, items in the School Bulletin for parents and a staff PL. On the event day they greeted students at the school gates with giveaways promoting Talk N Walk.

Bramfield Park Primary School

Our first Talk N Walk event at Bramfield Park Primary was a huge success. Our reflection meeting highlighted that it was well received especially from families who provided positive feedback about the conversation starters on the footpath to school.

A big number of our student walkers said that being with their friends walking to school, made them smile. This popular message had our walkers talking non-stop! "Look up! Can you spot the birds nest?"



"The Talk N Walk app was a great success. It stimulated conversation all the way to school this morning." Parent - Coolbinia Primary School

APPENDIX

Talk N Walk Card Deck - Nature Activities and Conversation Starters

Print, cut, laminate and provide to students.

How I'm Feeling Chart

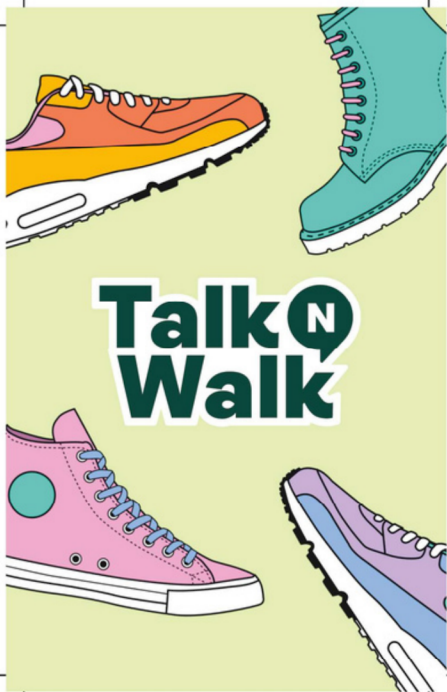
Print and ask students to add a coloured sticker to show their mood before they Talk N Walk and a different coloured sticker to show their mood after they Talk N Walk.

Talk N Walk App

Developed with support from Telethon, Healthway and the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries, the Talk N Walk app is free of charge, has no in-app advertising or payments, is secure, private and, once downloaded, can be used completely offline. In 2023 the Talk N Walk App won a coveted national award for digital accessibility from the Centre for Accessibility Australia, receiving the 2023 award for Not-for-Profit/Community Organisation App of the Year.

Families can be encouraged to use the Talk N Walk app at home to extend the health and wellbeing goals of the program into their daily lives.





Conversation Card



Conversation Card

Have you read any good books or seen any great movies lately?

Do you know any knock knock jokes?
What is the funniest joke you know?



Conversation Card



Conversation Card



Conversation Card

Is summer, autumn, winter or spring your favourite time of year? Why?

What are your favourite and least favourite things about being in nature?

Is there something that always makes you feel calm or that helps you to relax?



Conversation Card



Conversation Card



Conversation Card

Is there a skill you have that no one knows about? What are some things you are good at?

What is something that makes you nervous or scared?

Do you like to collect things? If so, what kind of stuff? If not, what collection would you like to start?



Conversation Card

What is one of your funniest memories?

What is one of your earliest childhood memories?



Conversation Card

What do you want to do for a job when you're older? Why?



Conversation Card

Do you have any hobbies or things you really like to do in your spare time?



Conversation Card

Who is someone you admire or look up to? Why?



Conversation Card

Have you ever volunteered or raised money for a cause you believe in? What was it?



Conversation Card

What are some things we have in common? What are some things that are different about us?



Conversation Card

If you were a teacher, what year level and subject would you like to teach? Why?



Conversation Card

What's the nicest thing someone has done for you lately? What has made you smile today?



Conversation Card

What are your superpowers?
Kindness?
Imagination?
Joke-telling?
Honesty?
Something else?



Conversation Card

What is a new skill you would like to learn? How could you go about it?



Conversation Card

What are three positive things you can say about yourself?



Conversation Card

What is a mistake you've made and learnt from?



Conversation Card

Have you learnt something new recently? What was it?



Conversation Card

What are five things you want to experience in the next five years?



Conversation Card

What's something, or who is someone, important to you and why?



Conversation Card

What are some things that help you to de-stress? Dancing? Cooking? Deep breaths? Something else?



Conversation Card

Think of something you're grateful for starting with each letter in your name.



Conversation Card

What's something nice you could plan to do for a family member or friend to show them you care about them?



Conversation Card

As you walk, think or talk about a problem you are having and possible solutions.



Conversation Card

Think about a time when something was difficult but you kept going. How did you feel afterwards?



Conversation Card

Think of a time when you were kind to someone by asking 'Would you like to join in?' or 'Are you OK?' How did you feel?



Conversation Card

What are some ways you can show kindness to yourself?



Conversation Card

Guess what my favourite animal is and tell me why you think so?



Conversation Card

Describe your dream house...



Conversation Card

What would a perfect weekend be like for you?



Conversation Card

If you could have one wish, what would it be?



Conversation Card

If you could be a character in a movie, what movie and what character would it be?



Conversation Card

If you could choose one cartoon character to be your friend in real life, who would you choose and why?



Conversation Card

If you could choose a superpower, what would it be? Why?



Conversation Card

What's your dream for your future?



Conversation Card

If you were stranded on an island, what three things would you want with you?



Conversation Card

What are some of the things you are curious, or want to learn, about?



Conversation Card

If you could design the school uniform, what would it look like?



Conversation Card

Would you rather come up with new ideas or discover how things work? Why?



Conversation Card

Is there a country or a place you would like to explore? What is it?



Conversation Card

What do you think life will be like 50 years from now?



Conversation Card

Would you rather be able to run really fast or jump really high? Why?



Challenge Card

Collect the prettiest fallen leaves you find - share what you like about them.



Challenge Card

Take paper and a pencil on your walk and draw all the things you find beautiful.



Challenge Card

Take paper and a pencil with you and make a map of where you walk. Highlight all your favourite spots.



Challenge Card

As you walk, try to spot every colour of the rainbow in nature.
&
Look and listen for birds - do you know what they're called?



Challenge Card

Stop somewhere pleasant and make a piece of art out of nature items.



Challenge Card

Stop at the playground and build a sandcastle with a tunnel the whole way through it.



Challenge Card

Imagine you're a wizard and find a stick to use as your wand. What spells will you cast?



Challenge Card

Pick a texture and find three natural examples of it
&
Play at least four rounds of I Spy.



Challenge Card

Skip or hop around
your school oval or
playground.

&

See how many steps
you can walk
balancing some
nature on your head.



Challenge Card

Hug a tree and release
any stress or worries.

&

Find some shade
and do some yoga
moves.



Challenge Card

Create a pattern out of
nature items, cover it
up then see if your
friend can re-create it
(no peeking!).



Challenge Card

Smell the plants and
flowers as you walk.
Talk about which ones
you like and don't like
the smell of.



Challenge Card

Make up a "word at a
time" story, where you
take turns, adding one
word at a time.
Start with Once - upon
- a - time...



Challenge Card

Stop somewhere nice
to play a game of
Noughts and Crosses
using sticks for your
board and nature as
your tokens.



Challenge Card

Look for four leaf
clovers.

&

Find a dandelion and
make a wish.

Talk N Walk

Send students outside to 'Talk N Walk'
for their wellbeing. Provide a walking
challenge and one or more discussion
cards.



Conversation cards that
support 'getting to know you'
discussions.



Conversation cards to spark
creativity & imagination.



Conversation cards to foster
growth mindset & mindfulness.



Challenges for students to
complete as they 'Talk N Walk'.



Write your own card



Write your own card



Write your own card



Write your own card



Write your own card



Write your own card





Write your own card



Write your own card



Write your own card

	Tired	
	Bored	
	Sad	
	Calm	
	Happy	
	Proud	
	Worried	
	Silly	
	Frustrated	
	Angry	
	Over- excited	
	Scared	

 Tired	
 Bored	
 Sad	
 Calm	
 Happy	
 Proud	
 Worried	
 Silly	
 Frustrated	
 Angry	
 Over-excited	
 Scared	



Further information regarding the Talk N Walk program is available from the Nature Play WA website www.natureplaywa.org.au/Talk-N-Walk or by emailing info@natureplaywa.org.au

Please get in touch if you are implementing the program at your school - additional resources, information and supports coming soon!

NATURE PLAY WA
CYGNET HALL
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